



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
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pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF NGOS

UNESCO, PARIS

(14-16 December 2005)

Summary Report

Knowledge for All “To Ensure Sustainable Development”

1. Opening of the Conference

1.1. Speech by Mr. Ahmed Sayyad, Assistant Director-General, Sector for External Relations and Cooperation at UNESCO, representing the Director General of UNESCO.

In his speech, Mr. Sayyad, after hailing the presence of the Chairman of the Executive Board and the President of the NGO Committee of the Executive Board of UNESCO, declared:

“On behalf of the Director General and on behalf of the whole UNESCO Secretariat, allow me to welcome each and every one of you and to tell you how happy and proud I am to be able to reaffirm the importance that all of us at UNESCO accord to interaction with the Non Governmental Organisations who, working in our fields of competence, help us in accomplishing our common tasks at international, regional and national level.

The value of such cooperation, considered by all not just as a necessity but as a strategic imperative, increasingly constitutes a vital dimension in UNESCO’s action. Indeed, we have always endeavoured to deepen our relations with the NGO Community over the years, since the very creation of the Organisation 60 years ago.

It is precisely because we are celebrating UNESCO’s 60th anniversary this year that I take the liberty of pointing to Article XI, para. 4 of our Organisation’s Constitution which refers to the importance of UNESCO collaborating with non-governmental international organisations concerned with matters within its competence.

Moreover, this opening up of UNESCO to the NGOs is evidenced by its NGO Committee whose mandate has just been strengthened by the last session of the General Conference in order to foster sustained partnerships with all the relevant NGOs in a concrete, efficient and targeted manner”.

He also emphasised the growing importance of civil society and recalled the important contribution of the NGOs in drawing up conventions, in following up on the major conferences: Geneva, Tunis, and in organising the Colloquium on HIV in November 2004.

Mr. Sayyad concluded his speech by extending thanks to Mrs Sauvage for her commitment and to the presidents of the Joint Programme Commissions (JPCs) and Working Groups.

1.2. Mr. Changfang Zhang, Chairman of the Executive Board

Mr. Changfang Zhang, Chairman of UNESCO’s Executive Board since the 2005 General Conference, expressed the wish to take the floor before the NGOs. In his speech he declared, in particular:

“To deal with today’s problems, the role of the NGOs has never been as important as it is now.....

In its charter, UNESCO has always accorded importance to NGOs. It is the only UN institution to have a specific body within its organisation devoted to the NGOs.....

The report that is to be presented next spring will emphasise this cooperation”

1.3. Mr. Andras Lakatos, Chairman of the NGO Committee of the Executive Board

Mr. A. Lakatos hoped that UNESCO would strengthen its links with all the organisations of civil society, including the professional NGOs. In particular, he declared:

“On behalf of the NGOs’ Committee and of the Executive Board, I can assure you that we will seize every opportunity to pursue the ongoing dialogue with NGOs.

It’s time now to extend and intensify the engagement among Civil Society.

UNESCO must also adapt itself to be able to absorb and channel the dynamic input of Civil Society. The fields of actions, such as education, science, culture and communication, are perhaps the sectors in which the role of expertise by professional NGOs is most pertinent.”

1.4. Mrs Françoise Sauvage, President of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee

After thanking the NGOs for coming in such numbers and Mr. Sayyad for his presence, Mrs Sauvage declared:

“Over the past two years, four areas have particularly prompted the Liaison Committee to manifest itself: the World Summit on Information and New Technologies; the preparation and adoption of the convention on the protection of cultural content and artistic expressions; Education for All; the Declaration of Bioethics. In all these events the NGOs have, not without difficulty, managed to make themselves listened to, even though they were more rarely actually heard. It is a good thing that the voice of NGOs remains plural in its expressions, its nuances and its appreciations, but it is also useful that the NGOs show a united front as often as possible in order to strengthen their position and to consolidate their role as fully fledged partners. And that is what the Liaison Committee has striven to achieve, in particular during the preparatory phase of the adoption of the Convention on cultural diversity.

In this turbulent world, the NGOs have never remained on the outside of the questions and challenges facing the international world. We want to make our contribution to the construction of a better world and, through our actions, contribute to the challenges represented by the Millennium objectives, taken up again in the final Communiqué of the World Summit of Heads of State, meeting in New York in September 2005: education, respect for cultures, the promotion of values, sustainable development and the eradication of extreme poverty are priority focuses for UNESCO, as they are for us too.

In his re-investiture speech last October, the Director General, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, recalled the three features that make UNESCO uniquely suited to face the complexity of the future. I quote:

- *intersectorality;*
- *the ability to anticipate and prepare for events;*
- *the ability to bring together a variety of partners.*

It is on this last point that I should like to reflect for a moment, Assistant Director General, Chairman, because it is an area in which you can help us and sometimes understand our concern.

All too often the NGOs experience a feeling of great frustration when faced with an absence of dialogue: difficulties of communication? Absence of mutual trust? Ignorance on the part of UNESCO of the work carried out daily on the ground by some of us?

I really feel we could do better and make our cooperation more effective. This wish to improve relations and to make our actions better known appears to be shared by the members of the NGO Committee of the Executive Board, whose Chairman we are pleased to welcome among us here today. To take better account of the work of NGOs, to strengthen relations with the Organisation as a whole, both at Headquarters and in the Field, could be one of the next tasks to be undertaken by the Liaison Committee: What future is there for NGOs maintaining official and operational relations with UNESCO?

This is all the more necessary in that the time is come to prepare the Sexennial report to be presented to the Executive Board in 2006. This report deals both with individual cases, each NGO being submitted individually to this verification, and with collective cooperation and the role of NGO representation to UNESCO.

In its broadest expression, civil society cannot be a substitute for the irreplaceable role of NGOs, that is to say organisations that are neither governmental in the national sense of the term, nor made up of States like International Organisations, nor profit-making like businesses. This situation not only gives them great independence but also constitutes a weakness insofar as they remain financially dependent upon aid they can obtain in exchange for the services they render and which society can no longer do without.

The Participation Programme goes through the National Commissions and it is urgent that the national and regional branches of our Organisations should more naturally approach the National Commissions and Field Offices, whose role is continually increasing due to the decentralisation policy undertaken over the past 4 years.

A number of participants having taken the floor to reiterate the ideas of the President, the agenda was adopted, the election committee was constituted, the resolution commission was set up and the Vice-Chairman of the Conference was elected in the person of Mrs Eva Egron Pollack.

Then the Secretary General and the Treasurer of the Liaison Committee took the floor.

Activity Report: Claude Vercoûtère,

Having recalled the composition of the outgoing Liaison Committee, Mr. Vercoutère set forth the mission assigned to the Committee as follows:

“This Liaison Committee met 11 times during the period, 5 times in 2004, and 6 in 2005. Its mission was clearly defined by the resolution adopted on 19 December 2003 by the International Conference of NGOs, which renewed the mandates of 5 Joint Programmes Commissions and 2 Working Groups:

- *JPC Science and Ethics;*
- *JPC Education for Sustainable Development in Urban Areas;*
- *JPC Dialogue between Cultures for Peace;*
- *JPC Eradication of Poverty particularly Extreme Poverty;*
- *JPC Communication and New Technologies;*
- *Working Group: International Decade for a Culture of Non Violence and Peace for the Children of the World;*
- *Working Group: Education for All and Literacy.*

It also recommended the creation of an NGO-UNESCO Joint Programme Commission on “Human Rights” and a “Youth monitoring” Group, set up as of May 2004 and which met 8 times.

The launch of the Human Rights Group, as a prelude to the creation of a JPC which, by definition is a joint NGO/UNESCO initiative, took longer to put in place. We hoped, effectively, that this initiative would be taken up by the major NGOs acting in this area, which unfortunately did not happen. Nevertheless, the number of participants and the launching of the first works allow us to be optimistic for the coming two years”

Mr. Vercoutère emphasised the scope and quality of the reflections undertaken by the JPCs and working groups. The JPCs are, by definition, bridges that link the NGOs to the work of UNESCO. Their meetings are followed by a significant number of NGO representatives who all make their contribution.

He then paid tribute to the quality of the relations with the different sectors of UNESCO:

“Like the previous Liaison Committee, we have kept up and maintained excellent relations with the Director General who received the Liaison Committee and twice met with the President and the Secretary General. During these talks we presented our work and our projects, putting emphasis on the work accomplished on the ground by most of the NGOs. On each occasion the Director General acknowledged the importance of the work of NGOs and Civil Society as a whole in the implementation of UNESCO’s projects and programmes and assured us of his support.

I should like to insist on the quality of the cooperation and the effective support provided by the NGO Bureau and by Mr. Abtahi. This support has always been unfailing and I should like to thank them for it, without forgetting Mr. Sayyad, Assistant Director General, to whom I extend my thanks on behalf of us all for his vision of cooperation with the NGOs”

Then Mr. Vercoutère took stock of the committee’s contribution to various issues and events:

- ❑ Coordination of the NGOs’ contribution to the drafting of the convention on cultural diversity
- ❑ Exemplary NGO participation in the conferences preparatory to the drafting of this convention
- ❑ Various speeches at the General Conference and Executive Board meetings
- ❑ Strengthening of links with the National Commissions
- ❑ Events in celebration of UNESCO’s 60th anniversary: recalling the week (23-25 April 2006) devoted to civil society.
- ❑ The Tunis Summit and the UNESCO Report on the Knowledge Society

Mr. Vercoutère pointed out the Liaison Committee’s insufficient financial means.

Mr. André Jeaglé completed this report by presenting the Committee’s new web site: he insisted on the importance of developing communication through this tool and asked each NGO to visit the site regularly. Mrs. Martine Levy and Mrs. Yseult Kaplan also raised this delicate subject of communication by presenting an information sheet on the Committee, which is available to the NGOs, and by also presenting a number of possible channels in order to better understand the world of NGOs and ensure better communication.

Financial Report: Mr. Noël Murati,

Mr. Murati first drew attention to the marked increase in membership fees received during the past 4 years (6600 euros in 2002, 8900 euros in 2003, 7100 in 2004 and 12000 euros in 2005) and to the positive balance sheet. The additional income came from the UNESCO subsidy and we thank the Organisation for this support. The main expense item in 2004 and 2005 concerned the costs relating to the internet site. The discussions that

followed enabled several persons to give their views on the Committee's needs, in particular in the area of communication.

2. **Round Table: Education at the Service of Sustainable Development, to Promote Values**

Moderator: Monique Fouilhoux, Education International, former President of the Committee

The Round Table comprised:

Mrs. Mary-Joy Pigozzi, Director, Division for the Promotion of Quality Education, Education Sector, UNESCO

Mr. Albert Jacquard, Geneticist

Ms Tana Wuliji, International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation

To introduce this Round Table, Mrs Monique Fouilhoux declared, in particular:

“The NGOs and the community of UNESCO NGOs have been very active for some years now on the question of sustainable development, in particular at the last Summit in Johannesburg, alongside UNESCO and the South African Government, where we contributed to the organisation of a parallel two-day event. We issued a plea for the United Nations to decide to make UNESCO the pilot agency for the promotion of the Decade. If we want to leave a viable planet to our children, it is time to declare a state of emergency and to decide, in particular, that the collective interests must take precedence over individual interests. It is time that the NGOs took on a vital role in this area”.

In her speech, having recalled the important role played by NGOs, Mrs **Mary-Joy Pigozzi insisted** on the question of ethical and ideological values, in particular the notion of respect, respect for others, respect for dignity and respect for future generations; and for that, she invited us to dream and to imagine a world in which: 95% of the population would have access to a correct standard of living.

Scientific development would provide for a real reduction in pollution and an overall improvement in the quality of life.

War would be a thing of the past

Government policies and institutions would ensure equal treatment, recognition of cultural diversity and peace in the world.

Globalisation would be made more humane and would ensure work for all.

The Decade invites everyone to participate in capacity building through education as well as in the promotion of values at every level of education and in every form.

If we want to set a precedent, our message must be coherent. This Decade concerns the rebirth of values that is only possible to achieve through a change in behaviour on the part of each individual. As Gandhi put it so perfectly: “We must all be the change that we wish to see in the world.”

Ethical values enable us to distinguish between good and evil, between moral and immoral, between just and unjust, whereas ideological values generally deal with subjects linked to the political, economic, religious and social life of societies. In this context, education for sustainable development obliges us to fight, all together, through different systems of values but with the same objective: to transform the concept of sustainable development into reality, through our collective and individual actions

For his part, Professor **Albert Jacquard**, Geneticist, invited us to share with lucidity what Paul Valéry wrote in 1945 “**The time of the finished world is starting**”. *The opposition of the verb “ finish” and the verb “ start” just proves that it is not the end in time, but in space and in resources. This world is finished. Everything must be rethought. Because, in our culture, we allowed ourselves to think the world was inexhaustible and we did whatever we wanted, but now that is no longer possible. We must think differently with a planet that is limited: With a population of 6 billion, soon 9 billion (the population has multiplied by 4 since the beginning of the XXst century, and by 30 since the time of Jesus Christ) the earth cannot provide for the population to live as it did when the population was 1 or 2 billion.*

For the essential, we are capable of taking our destiny in hand. Nature, alone, cannot. To achieve this dream, to build a humane world, we must rethink education and the role of schools because, in the end, in each human being there are two objects: there is an individual made by Nature, and then this unique object is capable of metamorphosis and becomes a subject. He can only fulfil himself because he meets others. Arthur Rimbaud said “I is another”. To become me, I must meet others; it is important to understand this need and replace competition by emulation. It is the regard of the other that enables me to improve myself.

Among Professor Jacquard's shock formula we can retain:

Everything must be rethought in the life of mankind because it is no longer possible to regard the earth as being inexhaustible in its resources. We must think differently with a planet that is limited.

- We must have achievable utopias
- UNESCO must be the planetary ministry of education.
- School must teach the art of meeting
- We are addicted to growth. We must learn to share
- We must achieve a mode of development that costs the Earth nothing.
- Any non-renewable resource belongs to future generations
- We must replace competition by emulation and change mankind's regard with respect to others.

Ms **Tana Wuliji**, of the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation, insisted on the brain drain that prevents sustainable development, the choice of other careers than those for which students have been trained, the temptation of an international life over a life just in one's country of origin. She pointed to the fact that there exist few studies on student migration. She presented a draft questionnaire on this issue, proposed to 22 countries selected from around the developed or developing world. Its aim is to use the resulting data to identify the educational and professional factors that block development.

The exchanges that ensued were very fruitful and mainly concerned the following points:

Education must be re-oriented at all levels, from nursery school level to higher education level, and in all its aspects, particularly by associating non-formal education.

NGOs have a special role to play, that of constituting pressure groups and providing solutions to concrete problems whereas UNESCO remains a forum for discussion.

For the first time, a Decade has the same interest for the North and for the South, and raises the question of interdependence and that of consensus around values. To go from a world in which the motor is competition to a world in which that motor would be emulation constitutes a radical change (Mr. Jacquard).

Equality between sexes in matters of education is a key element in sustainable development that can only be achieved by integrating quality in education.

Lastly, particular emphasis was placed on the risk of merchandisation of education, in particular at higher education level.

As Decade Coordinator, UNESCO must strive to develop partnerships and to promote privileged sectors such as water education, education for cultural diversity, communication and media education.



Thursday 15 December 2005 (Rooms VI, VII, XI)

Thursday morning was devoted to workshops around three themes, whose focus was:
Education at the service of Sustainable Development, to promote values

Workshop I: Role of the Media

President: **Antoine Zontag**, Caritas Internationalis

Rapporteur: **Catherine Deremble**, Catholic International Education Office:

This Workshop was organised in 2 parts: Part One: Media as an Educational Tool; Part Two: Media Training

Several speakers were called upon.

Divina Fraw Meigs, International Association for Media and Communication Research

Meriem Kaf, International League for Women's Rights

Daniel Van Espen, (Signis)

Janne Poort-van Eeden (IFOR)

Jean-Pierre Chaussade, (Pax Christi)

Réjane Ereau, (Respect Magazine)

Brigitte Chevalier, (WCRP)

Michelle Beg, (YMCA)

Sustainable development presents itself today as a project shared among all mankind. There are four pillars underpinning sustainable development: the economic, the environmental, the social and the political. The media constitute an important means of diffusion. Our workshop posed the question of defining what role the media play. The media contribute to the construction of reality by carrying the terms and the categories in which the actors and aptitudes of sustainable development are represented. The media provide a visible existence to those working in favour of sustainable development. Moreover, the media give over part of their time slots to those who wish to express themselves (forums, opinion pieces, etc.). The media can also play a discussion bank role. The media make a judgement on the images that they transmit, the less they make judgements, the less neutral they are. The media represent tools that are capable or not of making the debate. To make the agenda is an indirect strategy serving sustainable development. The media must report on the resolution of conflicts of interest.

By the problems it poses and the solutions it proposes, sustainable development contributes to reminding the media of one of the key elements of modern political philosophy: the general interest. Our workshop consisted of two parts, - the function of the media: the media transmit disaster, neglecting subjects such as the family, preferring economic and political subjects. Very often, the media simplify and caricature. It is therefore useful to identify newspapers and journalists capable of talking about sustainable development. It is important to give the media a reference framework in order for journalists to find their bases, so that sustainable development ceases to be a term with neither body nor soul.

Workshop II: Education in Urban Areas: to promote values

President: **Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin**, International Federation of University Women

Rapporteur: **Mireille Ksentine**, International Federation of Women Lawyers

Three speakers were called upon:

German Solinis, UNESCO, Programme Specialist, Urban Development Section, Division of Social Sciences Research and Policy

Christine Dagain, Soroptimist International

Fulgence Koné, Catholic International Education Office, Member of the Liaison Committee

To introduce the speakers and the discussions, sustainable development is an objective that today's societies set themselves in order to pursue their development. Since it is an objective to be reached, we must prepare ourselves for it and that is why education is a priority. By education we mean not only formal and informal education but also continuing education that we receive within the associative framework throughout our lives. We focused our reflections on the urban environment, because the urban area is recognised as a motor for rural development, as confirmed by the conference organised by UN Habitat in 2004. It rests on three pillars: the

economic, the social and cultural, and the environmental. We must reconcile these three imperatives by means of an arbitrage that operates in a political framework. For many people, sustainable development is a question of standards, but within the framework of a Joint Programme Commission, it has been decided also to include values, namely respect for individuals. The work session started with contributions from three speakers. Mrs. Daguin, representing Soroptimist, developed the theme of noise pollution. This represents one of the major sources of pollution. Noise is a problem of society and is increasing year by year. Noise is experienced as an intrusion into one's private territory. The means available to fight the problem are continually improving, particular in legal terms. This form of pollution causes violence, loss of solidarity. Through education campaigns aimed at young people, the ear must remain a tool for knowledge. Mr. Solinis, started by explaining the word "atelier". This word comes from craftsmen who combine their efforts on the same work. This new era since 1980 is not so much an era of globalisation but rather a worldwide internationalisation of economic exchanges. What can NGOs do? Above all an education effort. Everyday practices (consumer habits) are called into question, there is a need for a new solidarity ethic in order to ensure social cohesion otherwise than through the use of violence. Mr. Koné of Catholic Education said it was important to learn to live together in urban areas. On 2 November, UNESCO adopted a convention on cultural diversity. Among the measures to be taken, it is important to multiply the number of forums for expressing different cultures. You are invited to question Mr. Koné. When the speakers had finished, a number of organisations took the floor, the World Movement of Mothers, the International Federation of University Women, Foundation for UNESCO-Education for Children in Need, Soroptimist, the International Association for Charities, Coordination Committee for International Civil Service. It emerged that there is great diversity in the ecological footprint and that we must change our ways of life. Grass roots experiences at micro level are vital for studies at general level. In an endeavour to promote cultural diversity, school must become a tool for knowledge, for interculturality. Mrs Bernheim President of the Commission emphasised the need for NGOs to support each other mutually. To conclude, the President highlighted two points. We have born witness to our commitment to sustainable development. This commitment is based on an awareness of cultural diversity. Sustainable development is the empowerment of civil society for enhanced political representation at both micro and macro level.

Workshop III: Women as Actresses for Change

President: **Sayeeda Rahman**, UNESCO, Basic Education Sector, Programme Specialist

Moderator: **Paola Léconcini-Bartoli**, UNESCO, Head of Unit for Coordination and Evaluation, Culture Sector

Rapporteur : **Janine Marin**, JPC Chairman

Three speakers were called upon.

Claudia Rovelo-Gonzalez, Alternativa Solidaria, Chiapas Mexico Speakers

Rabodonavalona Rakotosihanaka, Founding President of "*Femmes Artisanas de Madagascar*"

Ahmed Mostaq, PlaNet Finance

The question posed by this workshop was to what extent education and training with micro financing can make women actresses in sustainable development and in the promotion of universal values. Three specialist organisations spoke. Five NGOs, all members of the commission for the fight against poverty, illustrated the theme with examples. All the continents were represented, and the education/training tandem appeared as a new challenge. Micro- financing bring new life to production at the village market? It makes it possible to achieve quality nutrition and sustainable development. Associating university people and new communication technologies could be a new way to bring about change. But to reach the poorest women, the role of NGOs is vital on the ground. Women with training appear as real motors of change. In the vision they have of themselves, their self-confidence. Thanks to their creativity, they create a common heritage that they will be able to pass on down. These women must be helped to fulfil their dreams. In their everyday lives, they must be able to feed their children and ensure their education; at community level, they are capable of reasoned thinking. A women who feels recognised will dare to take off her veil. Thirdly, the idea emerged that a need must be created to move towards governance. Quality agriculture and handicrafts facilitate the promotion of self-sustaining development. Governance starting at local level in order to reach national level. The workshop was convinced that governance from above cannot succeed unless democracy comes from below. The promotion of values such as respect, tolerance, responsibility must go hand in hand with education and training programmes. The workshop resulted in a series of recommendations for UNESCO or the other agencies or the NGOs. To promote awareness of the advantage of dealing with poverty. To avoid any stigmatisation while ensuring the application of dogmatic texts approved by UNESCO. To train towards a new concept of education/training, associated with micro-financing, in order to achieve success. In respect of the Liaison Committee, it was thought that university women could

make themselves available to rural women. Because the situation of unemployed university women and rural women with no gainful activity is the same. Banks must be made aware of micro-financing, which enables this evolution towards sustainable development. To pool common knowledge and know-how and at the same time integrate new knowledge. And to promote the training of trainers in order to intensify this process of change. Lastly, based on UNESCO texts, to promote women's rights, in particular in terms of their inheritance and property rights. Women must be made to understand that they constitute an important vector of information, in particular on illnesses/diseases. From this concept group, it is important to ensure that the education/training tandem and new financings come into existence. I am truly satisfied with this workshop. We were able to show the importance of this new concept based on values that are shared by all the actors. I thank the speakers for having given us a vision of the South by the South. And our recommendations really stem from grass roots level.

Round Table 2: NGO-UNESCO: 60 years of cooperation: Overview and prospects

Moderator **Françoise Sauvage**, President of the Liaison Committee

Participants :

- ❑ **Mrs Françoise Rivière**, Assistant Director General, UNESCO, Office of the Director General, in charge of Coordination of the 60th anniversary.
- ❑ **Mrs Odile Moreau**, International Federation of Catholic Universities, Former President of the Standing Committee.
- ❑ **Mr. Rao Chelikani**, President, International Foundation for Human Development, Former President of the NGO Standing Committee
- ❑ **Mr. Tony Hill**, Coordinator, United Nations/NGO Liaison Service
- ❑ **Mr. Zobel Behalal**, IMCS, Youth Group

To introduce the round table, Mrs Sauvage declared notably: *“As you know, we wanted to celebrate with you not only the 60th anniversary of UNESCO but also 60 years of UNESCO’s cooperation with the NGOs, because since its creation, the NGOs have always been present at UNESCO and moreover, as I indicated in the little text that you may still have in front of you, this relationship is embedded in UNESCO’s constituent Act. We therefore wanted this round table not only to bear witness to the past but also to be a reflection on the future.”*

Rao Chelikani, who left his mark on the “elders”, opened the discussions: a partnership, by definition, involves two parties. The NGOs have had to accomplish a substantial amount of work to position themselves independently but constructively with respect to UNESCO.

In particular he declared: *“As we have so often recalled, UNESCO was the first institution to institutionalise relations between this Organisation and the NGOs. Since then, we have greatly intensified those relations. Now, as you learnt two years ago from the group of UN experts and personalities who came to discuss with you, the intergovernmental organisation of the United Nations system has acquired a certain advance in this field”*

Mrs Sauvage then gave the floor to Mrs Odile Moreau who gave a certain number of work focuses such as the evaluation of the work accomplished in the joint commissions, and the rapprochement with the National Commissions

In her speech, Mrs Moreau recalled how long she had been with the Organisation, which she first joined in 1965, and the time when the NGO office was located in Fontenoy, thereby facilitating regular contacts with the functionaries. As President, she fought in vain against the transfer to Miollis.

The floor was then given to Mr. Zobel who stated:

“when you look for funds for actions, you take an interest in young people, you take an interest in women, you take an interest in populations that are very poor, and you realise that these interests are proclaimed in speeches, but once support has been obtained, no action is taken. It is therefore high time we went further than speeches, because the solutions exist, but UNESCO and the United Nations system in general lack the ability to put speeches into actions. Ask the heads of government who have made concrete commitments: what have they done about them? The solutions are there, all that it needed is to put them into action. Not only must we give young people a voice, but we must also listen to them. Another thing that we youth organisations must do is to invest in the monitoring of our actions, because we carry out a whole series of programmes at international, national and local level, but all too often these actions are not highlighted because they are not documented. We must invest more in this area in order to highlight what is achieved on the ground. And to do this means greater communication between the youth organisations, and a forum/platform is needed where they can meet and discuss their priorities. That is why we need a structure like the Joint Programme Commission to take into account the points of view and the specific ambitions of young people”.

The floor was then given to Mr. Tony Hill, Coordinator, United Nations/NGO Liaison Service, who developed upon the three major stages in the cooperation with the NGOs since the creation of the United Nations and its specialised agencies. He pointed out three generations of relations:

- ❑ From the foundation of these International Organisations up to 1989, the end of the cold war: formal relations, without any real commitment between the NGOs and the Member States of these Organisations.
- ❑ After the fall of the Berlin wall, things changed: in parallel to the major Conferences and Summits organised by the United Nations, the NGOs mobilised and held meetings that had a significant impact on the official events. This was the case:
 - At the Rio Summit in 1992 with 30 000 NGOs ;
 - At the Beijing Conference in 1995 ;

From then on, there was true interaction between the United Nations and Civil Society. Civil Society looked on world problems in a different way from the political parties and political organisations at national level, in particular concerning women's rights and environment-related questions.

Moreover, this cooperation was now also taking place at operational level, in particular in the humanitarian and emergency fields. Thus 2/3 of the UNHCR's budget now goes to NGOs. 90% of the development projects financed by the World Bank are implemented through NGOs.

An increasing number of NGOs engaged in lobbying activities in respect of States and decision-makers of all categories, in order to influence decisions at the highest level. In parallel, the whole of Civil Society was developing forms of concrete and direct cooperation with the United Nations.

- ❑ Then came the third stage, currently underway, which takes into account the report presented in June 2004 to Secretary General Kofi Annan by the High Level Think Tank, called the "Cardoso Panel". That report started by recalling the need to establish relations in such a way as to render them beneficial for both parties and, to achieve this, recalled the need for the United Nations to change the way it operates. It is certain that this whole process also affects UNESCO.
 - The first condition is that the Organisation should project itself more towards the outside and facilitate certain actions by partners that are more operational than it is.
 - That this same organisation should accept a plurality of actors around a common objective.
 - That the relation between the global and the local should be better taken into account and the voices of the developing countries through their civil representation be better heard. Whatever the problems raised by the use of New Technologies on account of a general mistrust, it is important to accept the fact that this is the future of relations with civil society.
 - Strengthening of democracy and of world governance.

What follow-up has been given to this report?

- ❑ From words to acts, the gap is shrinking
- ❑ Brazil put forward a resolution, which was set aside in favour of the resolution against terrorism
- ❑ Not much follow-up really: a meeting in NY with 200 Member states present to listen to the NGOs
- ❑ The meeting of ECOSOC next July in Geneva where a high NGO participation is anticipated.
- ❑ UN presence grouped by country with focal points
- ❑ Reform of the United Nations from the Commission to the Committee on Human Rights
- ❑ A challenge for the future: maintaining its performance in a rapidly changing world, despite opposition from certain governments; the NGOs must clearly define their contribution to the United Nations.
- ❑ Example of the NGO/UN alliance on landmines

Finally Mrs Françoise Rivière took the floor, expressing her pleasure at the frankness of the speeches.

She recalled the origin of UNESCO: France had proposed a tripartite system: UNESCO-States-NGOs. This was not adopted and there was, on the contrary, an increase in government influence.

To re-establish a certain balance and to give fluidity to its action and reactivity to its programmes, UNESCO created NGO federations, very often subsidised in order to facilitate their work. Moreover, UNESCO succeeded in giving the NGOs their place at international Summits and conferences, thereby avoiding counter-summits.

New guidelines in 1995 created tense moments in UNESCO/NGO relations, when they were put in place, but these difficult periods are but the reflection of normal confrontation that occurs when a group endeavours to introduce changes in a situation.

For the future, it is hoped that there will be:

A platform for permanent dialogue between civil society and the Intergovernmental Organisations, where the NGOs would also learn to talk to new actors, understanding civil society to have multiple representations, - this would seem a way for the future.

Greater financial autonomy for NGOs and preservation of their specific nature.

Real impact felt from the work of the JPCs in the sectors:

More sustained relations between the Secretariat and the NGOs

A consultation mechanism for national NGOs and the local branches of international NGOs in order to take into account the changes involved in the decentralisation strategy.

The forthcoming sexennial report must be an opportunity to formulate recommendations for the future.

Lastly, Mrs Rivière announced the launch of work on the History of UNESCO: UNESCO seen from the Periphery.

The results of the elections were announced at the end of the day: 330 voters registered; 14 votes by correspondence. Votes cast: 80 in favour of the NGOs maintaining formal relations; 85 for the NGOs maintaining operational relations.

The following were elected:

Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service – Formal relations of Association: 64 votes

Nigel Watt

International Council of Philosophy and Human Sciences – Formal relations of Association: 60 votes

Jean-Luc De Paepe

Education International – Formal relations of Association: 55 votes

Monique Fouilhoux

Catholic International Education Office – Formal relations of Consultation: 53 votes

Mr. Fulgence KONE

International Council on Archives – Formal relations of Association: 44 votes

J.N.T. van Albada

Traditions for Tomorrow – Formal relations of Consultation: 44 votes

Diego Gradis

Rotary International – Operational relations: 35 votes

Bernard Dervaux

Pax Romana – Operational relations: 31 votes

Zobel Behalal

Soroptimist International – Operational relations: 26 votes

Mrs Yseult KAPLAN

The Presidency

International Federation of University Women (IFUW) – Formal relations of Consultation: 83

Françoise Sauvage

Friday 16 December 2005 (Room XI)

1. Presentation and discussion of the workshop reports

The reports reproduced *in extenso* above gave rise to a number of remarks from participants:

- Workshop I: the speakers insisted on the importance of the media in educational matters, and thus the need for NGOs to develop communication strategies in order to remain in permanent contact with the media.
- Workshop II: It is important to appreciate cultural diversity around the same values. In order to live better in urban areas, meeting places must be set up. Schools play a role, but living together is a problem posed at all levels, at all ages. Living together must not be overlooked in rural areas either.
- Workshop III: Self-esteem could also help the promotion of women. Micro-credit interest rates are often very high, but women are nevertheless prepared to accept them because it is the only way for them to set up economic projects. Indignation on this point often comes from women in Northern countries. It would be interesting to know what women in the South think.

2. Discussion and approval of the general resolution and appended recommendations

3. Closing session

After the usual congratulations regarding the quality of the discussions, the natural result of two years of sustained work, **Mr. Ahmed Sayyad** pointed to the significant number of NGOs present, proof of the meeting's success, the presence of the new Chairman of the Executive Board and the President of the NGO Committee, thereby testifying to the close links between the NGOs and UNESCO.

The forthcoming sexennial report, covering the period 2001-2006, will establish an objective and critical overview of this cooperation. Mr. Sayyad assured the President that the Liaison Committee would be closely associated with the design and elaboration of the report. It was important that everything be done to preserve the privileged situation that the NGOs enjoy within the Organisation.

Mr. Sayyad concluded by thanking the Committee's outgoing team and extended his congratulations to the elected and re-elected NGOs, as well as to the outgoing President for her re-election.

The President closed the Conference by expressing her emotion at leaving the team with whom she had enjoyed working over the past two years. She thanked the NGO Section, in particular Mr. Abtahi, for the support and confidence they had shown, and the Secretary, Fatou Diallo Diaby, for her dedication and for the quality of her work.